

WEST BLOCTON- Congressman Spencer Bachus was on hand with others in Bibb County on Sunday for the formal dedication of the National Cahaba River Wildlife Refuge. The area to be designated a wildlife refuge contains the greatest concentration of ecological diversity of any river of its size in North America.

"This wildlife refuge will help us preserve this beautiful place for ourselves, our children and our children's children," said Bachus. "The refuge will safeguard the area's fragile beauty, but also allow managed access for the public. We want thousands of families, wildlife watchers, recreationists, and students to come here each year - because we can't save the Cahaba unless more people know about it and come to love it. It is here for us to enjoy - responsibly."

The 3½-mile Refuge site boasts more freshwater fish than the entire state of California and has been identified by Nature Conservancy scientists as the place with the highest concentration of biological diversity in the Cahaba River. In addition, the area is home to the largest stand of the shoals lily, known locally as the Cahaba Lily, which inspired the annual Cahaba Lily Festival.

"Currently, I am fighting to expand upon the original 3,500-acre refuge in order to further protect the sixty-four rare and imperiled species of aquatic plants and animals that thrive in the Cahaba. Of these, 12 species are listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. You cannot live in a state such as Alabama and not be awed by its natural

beauty and be inspired to do whatever is possible and practical to protect it," said Congressman Bachus.

In 2000, the National Cahaba River Wildlife Refuge was created by legislation that Congressman Bachus introduced and passed in the United States Congress.

###